

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
August 4, 2004
Cumberland County Courthouse
Cumberland, Virginia**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair	David G. Brickley
J. Benjy Burnett	Linda Crandall
Richard Formato	Gwen Mason
Stephen Murray	Susan Swecker

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Alan D. Albert, Chair	Gerald Connolly
Joy A. Cooley	Ted Drake

Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon	Leon E. App
Timothy J. Bishton	Jerry Cassidy
Linda J. Cox	John R. Davy
David C. Dowling	Joe Elton
Synthia Waymack	John Zawatsky

Call to Order

Vice Chair Sherry Swinson called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes from April 29, 2004

MOTION:	Mr. Brickley moved that the minutes of the April 29, 2004 meeting be approved as submitted.
SECOND:	Ms. Crandall.
DISCUSSION:	None.
VOTE:	Motion carried unanimously.

State Park Project Fund

Mr. Bishton reviewed the balance sheet for the State Parks Project Fund.

Staff recommended the following actions:

- 02-17 Chippokes - Ultra violet light filters
Close and return \$775.00 to park unallocated funds.
- 03-04 Twin Lakes/Cedar Crest – wiring/lighting
Close and return balance of \$3.67 to park unallocated funds
- 04-02 Kiptopeke – Landscaping
Close (completed)
- 04-03 New River Trail – Caretaker House at Byllesby
Close (completed)
- 04-11 Belle Isle – Family Fun Fest
Close (completed)

MOTION: Ms. Mason moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation
approve the recommended staff actions as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Swecker.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Staff recommended the following new projects:

- 04-11 Sky Meadows – antique furnishings for Mount Bleak \$5,000
House. Requested up to \$5,000 in park unallocated
funds to be designated for the purchase of antiques as
appropriate pieces are found.
- 04-12 Chippokes – install bronze marker plaque on \$775.00
Walnut Valley Farm. From park unallocated funds
(after the closing of project 02-17)
- 04-13 Twin Lakes – bulletin boards for interpretive \$500.00
events and communications notices.
From Parks Project Fund.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the parks projects as submitted by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Recreational Trail Grants

Mr. Davy presented an overview of the 2004 Recreational Trail Grants Recommendations.

The program has provided funds for over 160 trail projects in the Commonwealth since its inception 9 years ago. The average grant is \$55,000.

Thirty-eight (38) 2004 applications were reviewed by the 9 member Trails Advisory Committee. The total grant requests were for \$2.4 million. The total available funds were \$807,530.

Mr. Cassidy reviewed the 15 new trail projects being recommended to the Board. They were as follows:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Project Sponsor</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Award</u>
Va. Creeper Trail Interpretive/Educational Project	Virginia Creeper Trail Club, Ltd.	21,000	21,000
Luray Hawksbill Greenway Trail – Phase 3	Town of Luray	100,000	100,000
Beaver Dam Creek Community Trail System	Carroll County	90,750	90,750
Midlothian Mines Park Central Trail Improvement	Chesterfield County	10,000	10,000
Roanoke River G-way & Blueway Explore Park	Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission	44,980	44,980
Riverbend Park Potomac Heritage Trail Restoration	Fairfax County Park Authority	27,200	27,200
Upton Hill Regional Park Connector Trail	Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority	72,000	72,000
River View Park Trail	City of Richmond	100,000	100,000
Alleghany Highlands Trails System Douthat SP	Division of State Parks, Douthat State Park	46,400	46,400
Beaverdam Reservoir Park – Trail Restoration	County of Gloucester	20,000	20,000
Whitt-Riverbend Park	Town of Pearisburg	61,600	61,600
Alleghany Highlands Trail System Phase I	USDA Forest Service GW & Jefferson National Forest	125,000	100,000
Lakeside Birding Trail	Division of State Parks –	24,800	24,800

	Occoneechee State Park		
Buffalo Mt. National Area Preserve Trail	DCR Natural Heritage Division	40,000	40,000
Rocky Run ATV Trail Re-location	USDA Forest Service Dry River Ranger District	48,800	48,800
			\$807,530
Town of Grottoes Greenway Trail	Town of Grottoes	48,000	Pending
Seaside Park – Lakeside Trail	Northampton County	96,000	Pending

Mr. Cassidy noted that staff would like approval of the Grottoes and Northampton project requests in the event that additional funds become available.

MOTION: Ms. Mason moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation accept the Recreation Trails Advisory Committee recommendations on the 15 trail projects and 2 additional projects pending available funds, as presented and recommend to the Director of the Department of Conservation that action be taken with the Federal Highway Administration that will effect grant awards for these trail projects and that the Board further recommend that in the absence of insufficient eligible motorized trail applications the balance of prescribed motorized funds be awarded to non-motorized trail projects.

SECOND: Ms. Crandall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Land and Water Conservation Funds Grants

Mr. Davy presented an overview of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Virginia will receive approximately \$2,000,000 in funds this fiscal year.

The program began in 1996. It provides 50% matching grants for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation parks and facilities. This has resulted in the funding of nearly 400 local and state parks in Virginia.

This year, the department received 24 applications totaling over \$3,000,000 in grant requests.

Mr. Davy said that DCR was recommending the approval of 5 local projects totaling approximately \$825,000 and approximately \$1,000,000 for state parks projects.

Ms. Waymack presented the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Recommendations. They were as follows:

Park Improvement Project – Town of Grottoes

The Town of Grottoes in Rockingham County is seeking a \$150,000 grant for new developments at their 50-acre town park. These developments would include two multi-purpose ball fields, one soccer field, and support lighting facilities.

Total Cost \$300,000 – Grant Amount \$150,000

Louisa Community Park – Town of Louisa

This proposal is for the development of a small community park at an old 1907 school site within the Town of Louisa. The school itself is slated for conversion into a new Town Hall and Community Center. Park developments planned for 7+ acres at the site include a playground, two park picnic shelters and tables, walking path and bicycle trails, volleyball and basketball courts, an open space play area, parking and other support facilities.

Total \$150,172 – Grant Amount \$75,000

Sports Complex at Greenfield – County of Botetourt

This proposal seeks \$200,000 to match \$298,000 of local funds for the development of four multi-purpose ball fields at a 36.34-acre site in Botetourt County. These fields will be part of a larger, 125-acre parcel that has been set aside for recreational development. When completed, the complex will represent at \$2.5 million recreational investment. The recreational facilities are located within the 922-acre Greenfield development site, which also includes schools and an industrial park. The overall site provides impressive views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Total Cost \$498,000 – Grant Amount \$200,000

Falling Creek Park – County of Bedford

Bedford County is seeking a \$200,000 grant for the development of Falling Creek Park. The park comprises 270 acres and is one of four new locations the county has selected for new park development. First phase developments at Falling Creek Park would include two picnic shelters, an adjacent open patio area, restroom and utilities infrastructure, playground facilities, two soccer and two multi-purpose ballfields, court areas, trails, a fitness station, parking, and other equipment and support facilities. The grant proposal also includes the necessary site excavation.

Total Cost \$400,000 – Grant Amount \$200,000

Ivy Creek Park – City of Lynchburg

The City of Lynchburg is seeking a \$200,000 grant for development of Ivy Creek Park, which is located on the west side of the city. The proposed park is a 24-acre site that includes a lake that is fed by Ivy Creek. Developments will include an urban fishing area, environmental education center, native tree arboretum, picnic shelters, playground area, a dock for canoe and small boat launches, and renovation of an existing earthen dam and existing trails.

Total Cost \$782,000 – Grant Amount \$200,000

MOTION: Mr. Murray moved that the Board of Conservation and Recommendation recommend approval of the Land and Water Conservation Grant Recommendations as submitted by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Maroon said that he and John Davy recently traveled to Omaha, Nebraska for a meeting that looked at the future of funding of Land and Water Conservation Act. Mr. Davy was selected by the National Park service to look at funding. This program has been a major benefit to Virginia. Mr. Maroon reviewed the following information provided in a handout:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund is provided on a 50/50 matching basis to individual projects which are submitted through the State Liaison Officer (SLO) to the National Park Service for approval. The DCR Director serves as Virginia's SLO. State grant apportionments are retained at the federal level, and approved grant funds are disbursed on a 50% reimbursement basis for completed work on each project.
- Since 1965 this grant program has been the catalyst for the acquisition/development of state and local parks in the Commonwealth.
- Nearly 400 state and local park projects in Virginia have been funded through this program.
- The amount of Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) received by Virginia from 1965-2004 is \$73 million.
- This program has leveraged more than \$150 million for public parks in Virginia.
- The annual request for L&WCF funding assistance is 10 times greater than available funds.
- Lack of sustainable funding has caused uneven funding to states throughout the life of the program. For example, Virginia received \$7.6 million in 1979 and no L&WCF dollars during the period 1996-1999. Current Virginia appropriations have averaged approximately \$2 million the past two years – a reduction of \$1 million from the 2002 appropriation.
- Parks that receive L&WCF assistance are dedicated in perpetuity for outdoor recreation thereby ensuring the preservation of Virginia's public recreation estate for future generations.
- Legislation currently before Congress entitled the American Outdoors Act HR 4100/S 2590, contains more than \$1.4 billion in dedicated annual funding for the next six years for coastal impact assistance, stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR), and Wildlife Restoration.

Mr. Davy said that the bill before Congress looks at major funding issues. He noted that no action was likely prior to the election.

He said this fund has been extremely important and that better than 90% of Virginia localities have benefited from these programs.

Mr. Maroon noted that Mr. App had been working with both the National Governor's Association and the Southern Governor's Association regarding this issue. Governor Warner currently serves as chair of both Associations.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation go on record in support of the American Outdoors Act and that a letter from the Board be sent to the members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation.

SECOND: Mr. Formato.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He thanked Ms. Swinson for hosting the meeting.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR has been working with Ms. Swinson on a number of projects.

The first is the new GOB projects at Bear Creek Lake State Park which include both cabins and a meeting facility. DCR is working with the County on the development of public water and sewer lines which will serve the park and be operated and maintained by the County.

In addition, DCR has actively been working with the County on the conversion of the High Bridge rail line into a linear trail. DCR applied for and received an enhancement grant of \$80,000 from VDOT to do the planning for the trail and to provide initial security should the abandonment process proceed as anticipated. It is expected that the abandonment process will be completed by spring/early summer of 2005 at which time DCR will take over the corridor and begin the planning and development process.

Mr. Maroon noted that items 5 and 6 on the agenda dealt with State Park Master Plans. He noted that there were seven master plan renewals contained in agenda item 6. The Board has the responsibility to advise the Director on the approval of State Master Plans.

Those seven represent the first of the existing State Park Plans that were adopted in 1998. DCR staff recommended that there be no changes to these items. State law does not require any additional action other than that the plan be continued as is.

Mr. Maroon said that since this is the first time these have been dealt with it would be helpful to put on the agenda for one board meeting with renewal slated for the following meeting.

Formal concerns and comments should be directed to John Davy. Concerns will be addressed and plans will be brought back at the following meeting for renewal.

Mr. Maroon said that regarding the General Obligation Bond that there are facilities that are authorized and paid for under the General Obligation Bond which are starting to come online, yet there are not sufficient operating funds or staffing available for those facilities. This critical shortage will make it difficult to open those facilities in a way that will benefit the public.

Mr. Maroon noted that the agency has taken on new responsibilities. A bill that passed the General Assembly and was signed by the Governor moves the responsibilities for stormwater management from the Department of Environmental Quality and the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department into DCR. As of July 1, responsibilities for stormwater management regulations were transferred to the Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Also as of July 1, language authorized through the budget process specified that the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department, which operates the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act would be merged into the Department of Conservation and Recreation. This is a regulatory program and includes another major policy board.

The Department also received \$15 million over two years from the Water Quality Improvement Fund. Additionally there is \$2.5 million each year of the budget for Land Conservation. Most of these funds will be passed through to individuals, farmers and localities.

The Department did receive funding for 10 positions in State Parks and one in Dam Safety.

Mr. Maroon gave an overview of two upcoming conferences.

The *Southside Rails to Trails Symposium* will be held at the Keysville Campus of the Southside Community College on Friday, November 5, 2004. Topics will cover important information needed by decision makers in deciding whether to develop a rail trail in their community. There are over 350 miles of abandoned railroad corridors in the 22 Southside Virginia counties that have potential to serve as trails and greenways. Rail trails are popular community recreational resources and successful economic generators for rural communities.

For the *Virginia 2005 Greenways and Trails Conference*, DCR will join with BikeWalk Virginia, VDOT, VDH, DMV, DOF, NPS and many organizations to host a statewide conference in Richmond. The dates are April 30 through May 4, 2005. DCR has co-hosted statewide Greenways and Trails conferences in 1999 and 2000 and a mid-Atlantic regional conference in 2001.

Ms. Swinson noted that two separate trips were taken with local officials and citizens who are concerned about the possible High Bridge trail project. These individuals went to New River State Park to tour the park. It also provided an opportunity to talk to local business owners about the economic impact.

Mr. Maroon said there were two other items he wanted to bring to the attention of the Board. The first relates to Occoneechee State Park. He noted that those members previously on the Board were aware of the controversy concerning a golf course that did not move forward.

Occoneechee State Park is the only State Park that is owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and is leased to DCR.

DCR has been working with the town, the Industrial Development Authority and the Corps of Engineers regarding other projects that would be mutually beneficial. As the project has moved forward a senior staff team of Leon App, John Davy and Joe Elton have been meeting and working with the representatives in Clarksville. Clarksville representatives are very close to releasing their proposed plans. There is a timeline that has been developed working with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Secretary of Natural Resources for reviewing this proposal.

With the announcement that is forthcoming the project and proposals, the Board will likely hear from both supporters and detractors regarding the project.

The Board requested that staff provide appropriate talking points for Board members.

It is anticipated that the Board will need to consider a change to the State Park Master Plan.

Mr. Maroon noted that Mr. Leon App, Chief Deputy Director, will be retiring in November after 38 years with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mr. App responded that the time had passed quickly, and that he had been fortunate to work with the many programs of the Department and with the Board. He wished the Board members well and continued success in conserving Virginia's resources.

State Park Master Plan Amendment – Claytor Lake

Mr. Davy presented the proposed amendments to the Claytor Lake State Park plan. He noted that there are two things that require the change of a plan. One is the acquisition of additional property, the other is the plan to add a facility with a cost in excess of \$500,000.

The initial plan called for a renovation of the Marina Support Facility. However a review of the building indicated that was not feasible. Therefore staff is recommending a new Marine Support Facility. The park and community are in support of this plan.

MOTION: Mr. Formato moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend the approval of the staff proposed amendment to the Claytor Lake State Park Master Plan.

SECOND: Mr. Murray.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

State Park Master Plan Renewals

Mr. Davy noted that the *Code of Virginia* Section §10.1-200.1 F states that “Master plans shall be reviewed and updated by the Department and the Board no less frequently than once very five years and shall be referenced in the Virginia Outdoors Plan.”

Mr. Davy noted that staff is recommending no changes to the plans for the following seven parks: Pocahontas, Belle Isle, Douthat, Lake Anna, False Cape, James River and Caledon. He noted that staff is requesting that the Board take this parks under consideration and agree to take action at the next Board meeting. This will allow appropriate time for public comment regarding the plans.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation accept the consideration of the renewal of the Master Plans for the seven parks as presented by staff and that the Board take official action regarding recommendations for renewal at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

SECOND: Ms. Swecker.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

General Obligation Bond Update

Mr. Davy gave an update regarding the General Obligation Bond. He noted the following concerns:

- Regarding the EIR and Permit Process
 - A delay on the demolition permit for First Landing Bathhouses
 - A concern at Lake Anna with the rail bed and Indian hunting area in the new Campground.
 - At Belle Isle, a major Indian villages site may be present in phase 2
- Regarding the bid climate and high building construction costs
 - There were fewer bids than preferred, construction costs are running 25-40% over budget estimates.
- Department of General Services Division of Engineering and Building reviews
 - Administrative hurdles related to design approvals and achieving and appraisal and aquisition approvals.

Mr. Maroon reiterated that the projects will be a strain on staff resources as no additional funding was provide for staffing. He has created an internal working group within the agency to address this issue.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation communicate with the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the need for staff support funding for new projects as established under the General Obligation Bond.

SECOND: Ms. Crandall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

It was determined that staff would craft an appropriate resolution and letter to send to the Governor, the General Assembly, Lt. Governor Kaine and Attorney General Kilgore. Staff will develop a signature page for all Board members.

State Parks Update

Mr. Elton gave an update regarding State Parks.

The 2004 Youth Conservation Corps and Youth Service Corps programs were very successful with over 100 young people participating.

Mr. Elton provided the Board with a list of program accomplishments. A copy is attached.

The Department is conducting a parks fee study that will compare Virginia to other states and study how fees are determined. The study will include a market price comparison.

Other Business

The East Coast Greenways project is a Maine to Florida multi-use trail. Mr. Brickley is the Virginia Chair for this project.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation will be held on Thursday, November 4 at the Cedar Crest Conference Center at Twin Lakes State Park.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan D. Albert
Chairman

Joseph H. Maroon
Recording Secretary